

# Ideas of The Harlem Renaissance



Josephine Baker was a singer, dancer, and actress who started performing during the Harlem Renaissance.

The Harlem Renaissance was a major movement in African American art and culture. It began in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City. It started in the 1920s and continued into the 1930s. The time period produced not only important African American literature but also music, drama, art, and ideas.

An important idea behind the Harlem Renaissance was that African Americans refused to be considered less important than white Americans. They wanted to own their African American culture. They wanted to decide how to present their culture. Also, artists wished to show they were capable of creating their own art forms. They did not want to copy the art white Americans created.

During the Harlem Renaissance, many great African American musicians rose to fame in the Renaissance Theater. The theater was a music hall in Harlem.

Some famous artists were jazz musicians like Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, and Billie Holiday. The American poet Langston Hughes wrote an important poem called "Harlem." The poem famously begins with the line, "What happens to a dream deferred?" The poem is about the African American struggle for equality and freedom in the United States. The books, plays, music, and thoughts of the Harlem Renaissance still inspire American artists and writers of all cultures.

**Directions:** Fill in the graphic organizer below with the main idea of the text. Explain how the details you chose support your main idea. *Student answers will vary but may include:*

